

Research Questions from the Albuquerque Conference

Standards and Assessments

What is basis for Standards and Assessment Systems?

- Were content and performance standards developed with the input of American Indian/Alaska Native people?
- Were Standards and Assessment systems reviewed and approved by American Indian/Alaska Native educators?
- What is the relationship between parents and community's views of success and Standards and Assessment Systems?
- How do schools, parents, communities divide responsibilities to produce successful students?
- Is standard meaningful for students to survive in two worlds?
- Do standards include student skills to sustain community?
- Are Montessori approaches considered in developing Standards and Assessment Systems?
- Who was involved in developing standards?
- What is an effective school?
- Does 7 characteristics model of effective schools apply to AI/AN education?
- Are issues of cognition considered in developing assessments?
- Are students consulted in developing Standards and Assessment Systems?
- What does it mean to say community's choices about standards (what is the community)?
- Are there special characteristics of AI/AN children that need to be considered in developing Standards and Assessment Systems, specifically in the area of early reading skills acquisition?

What do Standards and Assessment Systems look like?

- Are American Indian/American Native students receiving standards based instruction? ^F
- Are American Indian/Alaska Native students being assessed with multiple methods?
- Are American Indian/Alaska Native LEP students being provided accommodations?
- What do evaluations of effectiveness of alternative assessments say?

- Are there assessments developed by Native educators and how do the results compare with standardized exams?
- How are data from large-scale assessments handled locally with validity?
- Are methods available to aggregate local assessments so they can be analyzed with other data?
- Do standards include an intervention program for alternative education?
- Are standards within school aligned K-16?
- How much variation in standards is there across communities?
- How does one document implementation of standards and assessment systems?
- How well do portfolios, etc. (i.e., authentic assessments) correlate to standardized tests?
- What Standards and Assessment Systems models are used with most American Indian/Alaska Native students?
- What skills are we assessing (really) with standardized tests?
- What are the barriers to implementation of standards and assessment systems?
- What has been the implementation of the “learning record” approach to assessment?
- What can we learn from the implementation of the “Alaska standards”?
- What is happening in the states, BIA schools, etc?
- What are roles of school leaders in implementation?
- Looking at successful alternative education programs, what standards and assessments do they use?

What are the results so far of implementing standards and assessment systems?

- Has American Indian/Alaska Native achievement increased?
- Are there any American Indian/Alaska Native schools where significant gains are being made?
- How well do American Indian/Alaska Native students perform on performance-based vs. multiple-choice tests?
- How do students who pass graduation tests compare academically in higher education with other students?

What student variables affect performance?

- What are the effects of transiency?

- What are effects of truancy/low attendance rates?
- What are effects of gender expectations?
- How do students in alternative education programs perform? (Also, how many ADHD-diagnosed kids are in these programs?)
- How do students in special education programs perform?

What school-level/curricular variables affect performance?

- What is effectiveness of standards-based instruction in single-gender classrooms?
- How well have alternative education programs/settings served students?
- What conditions have helped teen parents succeed?
- What are characteristics of schools where standards can be implemented appropriately?
- How are students doing in alternative models of education?
- Does the presence or absence of American Indian /Alaska Native symbols, images, artifacts affect performance?
- How do you prevent “crossover effect”? (lowered expectations, American Indian /Alaska Native images gone, etc.)

What resource factors (and other external factors) affect performance?

- Are professional development (including in-service and pre-service) programs for administrators and teachers focused on Standards and Assessment processes?
- Are the type or level resources provided correlated with performance?
- Can we develop standards for funding and adequate facilities?

What are systemic effects of Standards and Assessment Systems?

- Has the dropout rate for American Indian/Alaska Native students increased or decreased as a result of graduation exams?
- What is status of Indian schools, including funded BIA-schools, with regard to sanctions placed as a result of lack of progress?
- Has the movement resulted in loss of “play” and other education areas not specifically covered by the assessments?
- What has been the effect on classroom teachers (particularly inadequate ones)?
- What happens to curriculum integration when Standards and Assessment Systems are discipline-focused?

School and Community

Educating Students with Disabilities

- What are effective policies, procedures, and practices for appropriately identifying Indian students with disabilities in need of special education? (disproportionate representation, pre-referral)
- What are culturally and linguistically appropriate practices for facilitating effective Indian parent and family involvement in special education processes and program?
- To what extent are AI/AN children disproportionately represented in special education?
- How are parent/family involved in special education?
- What are effective practices for AI/AN students with disabilities?
- Which assessment instruments and processes are valid with AI/AN children?
- How are teachers prepared, including report of effectiveness, to work with AI/AN students with disabilities?
- Early childhood
- Funding and use of monies

Parent-Community

- What children [legal (?)] codes may help in giving more responsibility to the parent?
- What is the impact of tribal, state, county and city MOU/compacts on a community's well being.
- What traditional values do we uphold and retain, which values are being sustained?
- How do we hold individuals, parents, families, and communities accountable?
- What are working models in communities that address social and cultural needs of our communities?
- What factors are needed for a complete buy in [by parents, families, communities] to an education system?
- What are the most effective ways to achieve and sustain systematic change [in relationships among parents, families, communities, and schools]?
- State/tribal issues
- System of care
- School responsiveness to community

- What are examples of effective School/community/Agency partnerships?
- State/Tribal issues HB 528-Montana Alaska RSI
- How does systematic change in the relationships among parents, families, communities, and schools happen?
- Lessons learned: What do participants in parent, community, school partnerships think of them?

School Environment

- To what extent do attitudes/behavior, self esteem, gender issues affect education processes?
- To what extent are institutional racism and academic freedom problems?
- What are models of effective power and control and support for native people/students/parents?
- What are culturally and linguistically appropriate practices for facilitating effective Indian parent and family involvement in their child's special education processes and programs?
- What are the characteristics of successful/effective educational leadership in public and reservation schools serving American Indian/Alaska Native populations?
- What is the relationship between personal cultural values and successful student performance?
- How do the effects of a history of internalized oppression (American Indian/Alaska Native against each other) affect teachers' and staff's ability to advance successful students performance?
- How might tribal values and customs be effectively promoted in an environment characterized by challenging academic programs and high expectations of all students?

Quality of Teaching and Learning

- Does parent/community buy-in to the importance/need of formal school necessarily guarantee a higher quality of education?
- Does knowing American Indian/Alaska Native learning/teaching styles improve quality of formal education?
- Is the quality of teaching and learning directly related to course content?
- What kinds of teacher preparation positively affect the quality of teaching and learning for American Indian/Alaska Native students in urban/or rural areas?

- Which school reform model works best for American Indian/Alaska Native students?
- How do you make BIA or contract schools more responsive to the needs of the tribal community?
- What are the knowledge and skills teachers of AI/AN children should possess to achieve successful student outcomes?
- How do we educate/empower our American Indian/Alaska Native community members to take individualized responsibility for educating American Indian/Alaska Native youth?
- How does limited experience of Native American students in language instruction affect methodologies in language instruction?

Challenging Curriculum and Instruction

- To what degree are schools successful and all students achieve when they are guided by locally authenticized, aligned content standards and student performance assessment (e.g., world class standards, high expectations, history and culture of tribe(s))?
- What are the most effective methods of teacher communication and interaction with all American Indian/American Native students in reservation, off reservation, and urban schools?
- How will all American Indian/Alaska Native students benefit academically and socially from the active use of teaching methods that employ varied learning styles?
- What is the impact on student performance of a school comprehensive planning program that prioritizes an integrated professional development program for all staff?

Early Childhood

- What are effective early childhood education models and/or programs for Indian children and families that can be replicated?
- To what extent do Indian children and their families in reservation, rural, urban, and other settings have early childhood education opportunities available?

Tribal Issues

- Which communities have succeeded in aligning formal and informal education with community goals, including tribal traditional values and practices?
 - What are their stories?
 - What can we learn from them?
 - How did they define success for their children?
- What positive effects have tribal education codes and governments had on public schools?
- Purposes of education

- Tribal sovereignty/self-determination
- Tribal leadership – including public school support
- Tribal identity
- Tribal lands
- Enabling tribes to do their own research
- Support for Native American Ph.D.'s
- Native American scholarship (scholarly sense, not funding)
- Examining implications of the research applications
- BIA schools compared to public schools
- Defining system of Indian education
- Health and wellness

Language and Culture

Principles/Definitions

- Is there a shared definition of culture between Native and Alaskan Native, Pacific Islanders and other indigenous communities, and that of the dominant culture?
- Before data driven questions can be validly formulated - How do we agree on definitions of terms?
- What are the models that encourage Native parent participation or involvement in schools?
- What is effective parental involvement?
- What are the structural components of culture? What is the effect of these components on learning?
- What would an "Indian" education model look like?
- Do Indians want to assimilate into Whiteman's culture/education?
- What is the connection between language and, not only the traditional culture, but the contemporary culture as well?

- I was instructed by the women elders to tell you their opinion--do not allow this research to end without our culture, traditions being forced, pushed, shoved to be a goal. Otherwise we lose what small ground we had in the 70s.
- What are localized, culturally specific expressions of knowing, teaching and doing that can be translated into frameworks or models? What are essential features of community-based research partnerships?
- What should the structure of schooling look like? What would an indigenous model of schooling (with language and culture) look like?

Incorporation of Language and Culture

- What resources and strategies are available to motivate tribal communities to learn Native language?
- How will Indian schools create cultural and language curriculum that will address the diverse student representation of tribes prevalent in Indian and public schools today?
- How do we best implement parent involvement models in schools?
- How to incorporate language and culture in the face of mainstream pressure to be English-only?
- Are there traditional, collective community based organizations that can provide models in indigenous communities for administering language and cultural projects that reflect more traditional community organization?
- Are community goals for education articulated into schooling including curriculum materials?
- How are tribes going to work with the diversity of tribal dialects in language courses?
- How can non-Indian core teachers/educators utilize language in their daily classrooms and courses?
- Is the school the appropriate place to be teaching language? Culture? Why? If yes, how do we convince those community members, many of them elders, that it is ok to teach language and culture in schools? If no, what are the other options for language instruction?
- How can the Indian Way (culture, history) be taught in schools when teachers have their agenda (e.g., "Indians" taught during "Turkey day")?
- Does language and culture improve academic achievement?
- What native parenting practices should be included in pre-K through 4th grade schooling? How can language and culture be included?
- What is the process of practicing and facilitating the relationship between cultural curriculum, language priorities, and standards as applied to school-based education?

How does this process influence the purposes of education and inform the practice of creating and effective curriculum?

- How can tribal sovereignty be used to incorporate indigenous culture and language into educational curriculum?
- How can we better tie technology to language and culture?

Immersion

- Investigations to derive data as to the success of immersion efforts.
- Identifying processes to support immersion beyond the school community into the home.
- Does an immersion model work in every community?
- What are the barriers that impede immersion models from forming and working in Indian country?
- How do we draw upon the exemplary aspects of immersion programs to further support language revitalization, educational research, and programming?
- What are the effects of Indian language immersion programs on students' behavior?
- What are the results (outcomes) of teaching indigenous languages, especially through immersion?

Urban Arena

- How does language and culture influence urban Indian youth in their educational attainment? their self-perception? their career choices?
- How can urban Indian populations be provided with cultural support?

Wellness

- What ingredients in Native children upbringing make them successful in Indian ways of life as well as non-Indian way of life?
- There is a need for investigations related to language repatriation or well-being and environmental health and justice issues.
- Is there a correlation between levels (incidents) of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence among American Indian/Alaska Natives and Pacific Islanders who have retained their language and cultural knowledge and those who have not?
- Research the relationship between environmental health, environmental justice and traditional culture, specifically what kinds of knowledge do traditional speakers and cultures have that maintain healthy communities and lands?

- What can be done so our children can embrace and desire education, cultural practice, language, etc. without a sense of "obligation?"

Teacher Preparation

- What are Native teachers learning in universities and teacher education programs?
- How are teachers who serve Indian children being prepared to teach?
- How is what teachers learn in teacher education programs (content) aligned with the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native children who attend school?
- Do teacher education programs in colleges and universities provide effective training for teaching Indian children? How can teacher training institutions become more effective in preparing teachers to teach Indian children?

Pedagogy

- How do we best teach the language (Will we use books writing? Will we keep it oral, as it has traditionally been passed on? Will we create new words or stay with the old vocabulary for words? Will we teach English concepts in the language?)?
- How can we stimulate memory and the skill of listening in children and in native researchers?
- What is the best way to teach Indian languages given community variations?

Student Achievement

- What is the relationship between academic achievement and culture?
- How has the family and children education program impacted the revitalization of language, culture, and parental (family & community) involvement on the existing 22 sites over the past decade?
- How will teaching language and culture address the cultural levels and continuum of "Indianness", which exist within our schools and on our reservations?
- What impact does acquisition of Native language have on academic performance?
- Does integration of Native studies in schools basic curriculum have an effect on academic performance, attendance, self-esteem of Native students?
- How can teaching indigenous languages to American Indian students increase academic success, increase proficiency in math, science, reading, etc.,
- How will teaching the Hopi language and culture to Hopi elementary students increase their math performance and raise the student's standardized tests?

- Does being fluent in one's tribal language and culture encourage student performance and academic success?
- How does teaching the Hopi language and culture to high school students increase high school completion?
- Do Indian children test higher in self-esteem in their Native languages? Does this higher self-esteem extend to other aspects of life?
- How does singing, drumming, and speaking to an affect infants (prenatal and after birth)?
- How effective are language and cultural behaviors as tools toward academic achievement?
- What is the relationship between learning a native language (and culture) and achievement in academics?
- What are the characteristics of native students who do well in school?

Historical (Legacy & Roles)

- How do we educate parents to not accept the strategies of a poor education?
- Why has it taken so long to incorporate language and culture into Indian education?

Capacity Building

- How can Native Americans be encouraged to develop their own language projects such as dictionaries and immersion programs?
- How do we finance university research efforts?
- How will tribes maintain and utilize their languages within their contemporary societies, for post-education purposes?
- What are the benefits of cultural academia to a public school system?
- What do congressional legislators know or perceive about American Indian language and culture?
- How do we bridge the gap between the mainstream education and community-based education (i.e., language and culture)?
- How can change be sustained over time--long enough for the change to be measured?
- How can we maximize research resources by combining research dollars and resources of the community and school?

Comparative Research

- How can we incorporate cross-cultural models-such as Maori and Sami into native models for lifelong learning?
- Comparative research is needed to identify extant anthropological educational research on immigrant populations that speaks to the fact that first generation immigrants do better in school than their second and third generation Hispanic American counterparts?
- What is the applicability of research and literacy in indigenous languages compared to a broader context of literacy?
- We need a comparative study of English immersion programs and evaluation of immersion programs

Identification and Definition Issues

- How important should tribal identification be in the process of identifying American Indians for programmatic and other purposes? What are the impacts of alternative definitions?
- What will be the impact of eliminating blood quantum; should this standard be eliminated from all federal programming? What will be the impact of a ban on this standard?
- What will be the impact of the new OMB standard allowing multicultural reporting on data and programs pertaining to American Indian education?
- What measures would be required to implement greater tribal detail in federal statistical systems?
- Surveys of tribal enrollment practices should be done to review current practices and determine impact of a new enrollment practice for tribes. For example, what are the ranges of possibilities for inclusion of Indian blood?
- A good demographic study of American Indians and Alaska Natives is needed to assist tribes in developing capacity for a Census Bureau of Vital Statistics as a key to implementation of program and planning. Possibly develop intergovernmental agreements—638 laws need revising.
- What is the psychological impact of identifying as American Indians in urban areas vs. rural and reservation schools?
- Compare enrollment practices in United States with what is taking place in other countries, such as Canada or Australia.
- Different recognition criteria should be considered for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Branch of Acknowledgement.

Research Questions /Regional Partnership Forum

(L) Supporting the Learner/Student

- How many Native students have started and completed high school during the last ten years?
- What are effective practices for reducing the American Indian and Alaska Native (hereafter AI/AN) drop out rate or for serving those who have already dropped out?
- What are the factors contributing to the drop out rate among AI/AN students?
- Are there certain characteristics of the learning style of AI/AN students that lead educators to over-identify them as learning disabled?
- To what extent does transience impact the academic achievement of AI/AN students?
- What are the effective practices in maintaining high levels of self-esteem among Native students throughout their education? Furthermore, what support and/or counseling services are offered to Native students and do these services serve to decrease the drop out rate?
- Are drug and alcohol prevention programs successful in decreasing failure and drop out rates among Native populations and if so what are the characteristics of successful programs and interventions?
- How is the diversity and complexity of Native populations addressed in developing culturally sound standards?
- Is there a correlation between inappropriate standards (both cognitively and culturally) and drop out rates?
- How must early childhood programs be structured so that they foster the fundamental skills that children are expected to have when they enter school?
- How can we assess varying levels of acculturation within schools to determine flexible standards that accommodate all students?
- How can we distinguish between cultural discontinuity in the classroom and social problems like poverty that impede education?

(TL) Strengthening Teaching and Learning/ Classroom Environment

- To what extent are culturally relevant language and themes incorporated into schools and how do they impact education? [***In order to establish standards for infusing curricula with language and culture, we must take into consideration the specific articulation of culture for each community/tribe, as well as the stage of its language.]

- Can we learn from language programs such as the Hawaiian immersion program and apply promising practices to our own language needs?
- What are effective practices for implementing culturally relevant curricula?
- Are there basic elements of a culturally relevant curriculum?
- Are there cultural values within AI/AN communities that are lost when children attend school? If so, are there methods of teaching that will help to revitalize certain aspects of culture?
- Is there evidence to support the premise that teachers will be more effective in their teaching if they learn about the Native culture and language of their students?
- If teachers of Native students incorporate language and culture into the curriculum will it serve to validate the identity of the students and boost self-esteem levels?
- What are the most effective cultural training methods and professional development models in practice? How can we work on local, state, and federal levels to subsidize programs?
- How can we collaborate with universities and community college systems to develop teacher-training programs that foster cultural sensitivity, focus on tribal language development, and prepare teachers to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students?
- How can educators and community leaders/members work to recruit teachers to work at schools serving AI/AN students? Will the qualifications differ for native and non-Native teachers?
- To what degree does the presence of Native teachers and administrative staff impact the success of Native students?
- Does the cost of an education degree deter Native students from pursuing a career in teaching?
- How can we support and motivate teacher's aides or other members of the Native community to enter teacher-training programs?
- How do the beliefs, personal experiences (both as a learner and a teacher), language ability, and cultural knowledge impact the pedagogy of teachers?
- What practices are in place to provide supplemental instruction to help Native students pass the state graduation test (if applicable)?
- To what extent do teachers mislabel Native children as learning disabled? How much of the error can we attribute to inaccurate methods of testing and assessment and how much can we attribute to teacher beliefs and practices?
- What programs have demonstrated effectiveness in promoting maximum learning capacity for Native students?

- How does cultural discontinuity impact communication structures between students and teachers?
- Is it possible that unproductive communication structures between students and teachers are the result of social problems such as poverty? How can teachers distinguish between problems in communication that are related to cultural discontinuity and those that are related to fatigue and poor nourishment as caused by poverty?
- To what extent are students in rural Alaska presented with a challenging curriculum?
- How can teachers develop fundamental skills such as reading and math using culturally relevant materials and methods?
- How can we organize a network of tribal early childhood programs to address issues, resources and action plans?
- What are effective approaches to instruction/curricula for American Indian/Alaska Native students with disabilities? Do these approaches differ from those used with AI/AN students without disabilities? If so, how?
- What factors contribute to the referral and placement of AI/NA students in special education programs? (e.g., language, culture, assessment practices)
- What is being done to develop and validate assessment instruments for use with AI/AN students?
- How effective are special education teacher-training programs? How many graduates of them actually work in the field (with AI/AN students)? What are the geographical areas?
- How are the Bureau of Indian Affairs/Office of Indian Education Programs, the United States Department of Education, tribes, and states preparing or influencing the preparation of teachers and administrators to effectively implement the provisions of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act?

(SCS) Strengthening the Capacity of Schools

- What are effective practices for ensuring that Native students feel comfortable in schools (especially when they constitute the minority) and how can administrators and teachers welcome their parents and elders into the school to share their knowledge?
- Where will schools get the funding to pay elders and others from local communities who help facilitate cultural learning?
- How can we train school administrators to identify culturally insensitive teachers and practices that are detrimental to Indian schools?
- What measures can schools take to better communicate with tribes in order to coordinate resources?
- How can we improve the infrastructure of schools to provide students with a more comfortable learning environment?

- How can school boards and tribal governments communicate more effectively to ensure equitable resources for students in both public schools and B.I.A. funded schools?
- What can we do to improve mental health services and wellness programs in schools serving AI/AN students?
- Do high student mobility rates have implications for achievement and assessment? What can schools do to account for student mobility?

(PC) Parents and Community Involvement / Strengthening Tribal Community Capacity

- What are effective practices for involving parents in the education of their children and for empowering them to motivate and encourage their children?
- How can tribal communities be mobilized to participate meaningfully in the various educational systems to restore and revitalize Native languages?
- How can we empower parents and draw on their knowledge of tribal language and culture to promote and facilitate literacy among them?
- Is it possible to get money directly from tribes to support school programs (in class or after school) that support the areas of American Indian and Alaska Native education such as history, language, and culture?
- How frequently do Native parents observe their students in school?
- What do parents and other Native people expect their children to know when they graduate from high school?
- What are some barriers that limit collaboration between schools and community based organizations? What are some factors that enhance and strengthen collaboration?

(CB) Capacity Building / Strengthening the Capacity of the System

- Do standards that do not take into account the cultural differences between Native students and the majority of students in the United States accurately measure achievement and success of Native students?
- Are there existing assessments and tests that are effective in accurately assessing Native students?
- Should there be a national standard for achievement among Native students?
- How can agencies from the local level up to the federal level communicate to efficiently assess and define needs of Native students?
- What can we do to advocate for AN and NA representation at all levels of the education system? How can we motivate and empower Native people to pursue such positions?

- How can intergovernmental partnerships work to address the need for tribal specific history and cultural awareness training for professionals who work with Native students?
- How can the B.I.A. oversee charter and grant schools without compromising the independence of the schools?
- Who should be responsible for evaluating and directing contract and grant schools? Should this be an entity not tied to the B.I.A.?
- What measures can tribal governments and local school districts take to ensure that sufficient grant money is provided to Indian and Alaskan schools?
- How can states develop specific education plans that will promote the collaboration of intergovernmental partnerships on issues of funding?
- How many tribal governments have direct involvement with school districts?
- Why are funds for maintaining and expanding our schools limited?
- What funds are available for programs such as high school graduation incentives, library upgrades, or summer book distribution?
- What is the nature of the relationship between the federal government and Native education in Alaska? What are the affects of that relationship on education?
- What is the extent of local control involving villages and regional tribal organizations in the education of Native children?
- What are the affects of local control on the education of Native children?
- What practices are effective in increasing the level of local control of education by villages or regional tribal organizations?
- How do expenditures for education of Alaska Natives compare with expenditures for other populations in Alaska and elsewhere? How does the difference impact achievement?
- Are there examples of school report cards that would be appropriate and useful in the context of rural Alaska schools?
- What are appropriate report cards or evaluations for schools and teachers serving Native students? How can we develop standards for these evaluations?
- How do tribal codes of education or tribal departments of Education (e.g, Rosebud, Navajo, etc.) impact the development, implementation, and evaluation of standards and assessment systems?
- Is Indian education a trust responsibility? What does the Federal Government policy of Tribal Self-Determination and the Government-to-Government relationship mean for states that educate Native students in public schools?

(DR) Dissemination and Research

- How can we establish a network among tribal leaders, parent groups, schools, and school boards to share information on promising practices?
- What has been learned from the programs of the Maori in New Zealand, Native Hawaiians, and Mohawks, and is it appropriate to generalize the information?
- What are the results of heritage immersion programs?
- What efforts have been made to compile previous research on AI/AN students, including theses and dissertations?
- What evidence is there to support the premise that Native language retention and revitalization are at the heart of providing a quality education?
- How can we effectively provide tribes with information on funding, research studies, and evaluations for effective models and practice? (U.S. Department of Education)
- What are some of the implementation strategies that ensure that research will be conducted in the area of standards, assessment, and accountability for American Indian/Alaska Native students?